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Comments: The Forest Service's proposed new rules have huge implications for wildlife and wilderness on millions of acres of your public lands.

Currently, domestic cattle and sheep are grazing on about 8 million acres of National Forest Wilderness, mostly in critical watersheds particularly unsuited to grazing. Over 2.5 million acres of that total is within vacant (unused and unallocated) allotments should remain so.

And while the original authors and supporters of the Wilderness Act of 1964 wanted to end grazing in Wilderness because grazing is fundamentally at odds with Wilderness, the politics at the time wouldn't allow it.

Today the negative impacts of livestock grazing are much more clearly understood, including degraded water quality and soils, the spread of invasive weeds, destruction of riparian and other important habitats, reduced forage for and displacement of native wildlife, and much more.

The Forest Service proposed revisions to expand grazing across our National Forests and within Wilderness by directing vacant allotments to be fully restocked and by returning grazing to the excessive levels permitted in the 1960s, despite conditions that cannot support increased grazing.

This is the opposite direction the Forest Service should take. Instead of increasing livestock grazing on public lands, the agency should allow vacant allotments to be permanently closed and should protect Wilderness, other public lands, and wildlife by limiting, rather than increasing, inappropriate livestock grazing in National Forests.

Additionally, the proposal fails to hold livestock grazers accountable by not setting proper standards to adequately monitor conditions on the ground, and it excludes the public from some grazing decision processes.

Further, increased grazing would fuel livestock grazing's contribution to the climate and biodiversity crises.

We urge the Forest Service to do the right thing for the Wilderness, other public lands, and wildlife by dropping its proposed Rangeland Management Directives.